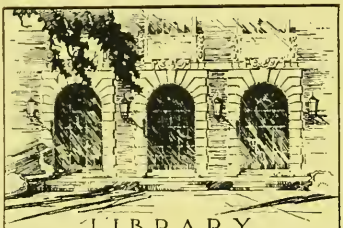

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A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY

OF THE EAST-RIDING,

AT

THE ORDINARY VISITATION,

1844.

BY ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, M.A.,

ARCHDEACON OF THE EAST-RIDING.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
YORK: R. SUNTER.
HULL: W. R. GODDARD.

MDCCCXLIV.

TO THE

VENERABLE ARCHDEACON TODD,

RECTOR OF SETTRINGTON,

TO

THE REVEREND THE RURAL DEANS,

AND TO

THE OTHER CLERGY OF THE EAST-RIDING

WHO REQUESTED ITS PUBLICATION,

THIS CHARGE

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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A CHARGE TO THE CLERGY,

ETC., ETC.

My Reverend Brethren,—I cannot call your attention to the public measures by which our position has been modified during the past year, without expressing my regret that our legislators are not content to leave us to the discharge of those unnoticed but not unimportant duties to which we have vowed our souls. It certainly is but reasonable, now that the legislative body has ceased to consist exclusively of Churchmen, that it should abstain from an intrusion into our internal affairs from which all other societies in the country are exempted. We have pledged ourselves in return for that protection, which secures to us the gifts of our departed benefactors, to make no laws for our own government without the consent of her Majesty, and we consent to adopt those persons as our spiritual rulers who find favour in her sight. This established settlement, the main body of the clergy, I am persuaded, have no present wish to interrupt. It is the more important that we should not be driven to doubt its wisdom by finding that spiritual questions are interfered with by parties who are neither qualified nor entitled to decide them, but whom the vague name of an Established Church persuades that we are only functionaries of the civil power, and have less claim to independent rights than those who are merely tolerated by the magistrate. Whereas we differ from them only in that our rights being recognised by the State, we have been

contented hitherto to leave them undefended. We have no committee of privileges like the unestablished possessors of religious endowments, because having an authorised representation in the Houses of Convocation, we cannot constitutionally recognise any other body. Hence that difficulty in expressing our united opinion, which is not felt by those who have a more pliable organization. But what must be the result, supposing that this circumstance is turned to our disadvantage, and that our rights are less respected because they are recognised by the laws of the land? Such a state of things we need the less anticipate after the recent decision of the House of Lords against the extinction of one of our most ancient bishoprics, because it witnesses a disposition to respect the wishes of the clergy on a question on which they have peculiar interest and knowledge. On the question itself I say nothing: it is hard to speak of it with the calmness which is due to the character and place of its supporters; but whatever may be the result in the present year, I feel persuaded that the well-nigh unanimous voice of the clergy will ultimately be successful. Let us hope that this point conceded, we may not be compelled to step forth again from our privacy, and make our voice heard by the legislature.

Somewhat similar may be said respecting another important measure, which may now almost be spoken of as certain, whether concluded during the present year or no, I mean that by which it is proposed to extinguish peculiar jurisdictions, and to subject the whole body of the clergy to the bishops in whose dioceses they dwell. It is not a little surprising that it should have been left to the British Parliament, in the year 1844, to remedy an evil which commenced with the foundation of the reformed order of Benedictines of Clugni, A.D. 1063. This was the beginning of those exemptions which were introduced by the bishops of Rome between the 11th and 16th centuries, and which formed one of the grand expedients by which they maintained their influence in all parts of Christendom. When the Crown, at the Reformation, asserted to itself that secular power which had been usurped by the Pope, these exempt parishes ceased to be under any episcopal authority. By the general laws of the Church of England they

would have fallen again under the jurisdictions from which they had severally been withdrawn ; but they had gained a legal hold upon the custom of the country, which the strength of private interests made it difficult to relax. It was reserved for the present period, when individual interests have been swallowed up in the augmented population and wealth of the country, to withdraw those restraints which have so long prevented the laws and customs of the Church from flowing into their natural channel. The measure which is at present in progress, especially if compared with that which was introduced in former years, encourages the hope that Parliament will be contented to abstain for the future from direct legislation respecting Church matters, and will merely unloose the shackles which its jealousy has in past times imposed upon our efforts. What the Church needs of the State is only to be relieved from the burthen of those laws by which, in former times, she was compelled to exercise a coercive control over schismatical parties, —laws, the perpetuation whereof only mocks her impotence and embarrasses her efforts—and to be allowed freer scope to direct her existing resources towards the benefit of voluntary members of her communion.

In no part of the county will the effect of the measure at present in progress be more important than among ourselves. The existence of forty-nine parishes under peculiar jurisdictions within the limits of this single Archdeaconry has interfered materially with that unity of action which is essential to the efficiency of the Church. We have been taught on the highest authority that a house divided against a house falleth. We cannot be ignorant that unless we are ready to act together, in the spirit of a frank and cheerful acquiescence, looking less to the requirements of law than to the suggestions of conscience, we can little answer to the necessities of our country. To draw forth this unity of action, the Church exacts a promise from every one of her ordained children, that they will not only render such obedience as can be enforced by penal enactment, but likewise that they will co-operate in every godly attempt to which their aid is invited by her constituted authorities. " Will you reverently obey your ordinary, and other chief ministers—

following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?" On this principle must depend all attempts at united action, which under any circumstances could hardly be enforced by statute, and till the synods of our Church regain their liberty, must depend altogether on the authority of conscience. Its free development will be facilitated by the change which brings us together. No peculiar jurisdiction will interfere henceforth with the obligations of our oath of service: we shall have the same places of meeting; the calls of charity and the demands for mutual concert will be responded to with augmented ease—and, therefore, with increased effect.

If I dwell at length on this subject, it is because I feel that upon it depends the main effect of the present meeting. For without renouncing my official right to make this court an opportunity for the enforcement of any doctrinal truths which may demand notice, it seems more expedient to urge upon you the consideration of such practical questions as affect the due discharge of our common duties. In doing so, I can appeal to that solemn promise which assures me of your concurrence. Should I suggest what may be inapplicable to the circumstances of some, or divergent from the practice of others, it is much that your "glad mind and will" should at all events co-operate with my attempts.

Let me bespeak your assistance, then, in the attainment of two great objects, of primary importance to the inhabitants of this Riding—an increase in the means of instruction, and better opportunities for public worship.

The first of these must be attained by augmenting the number of our schools, and increasing their efficiency. In several places, subscriptions have been entered into, during the past year, for the purpose of providing national schools: an advantage of which many large villages are still destitute. Yet, without such assistance, the poor cannot possibly provide their children with suitable instruction. I do not stop to demonstrate the importance of education, which few in the present age deny: for the question which meets us in this day is, not whether children shall be taught, but whether the lessons of their childhood shall be associated with the

fear of God, and an attachment to the institutions of their country. For this end, it is not less material to render our schools efficient than to create them. And no schools will permanently flourish without such an organized system of inspection as may enable masters to profit by recent improvements, and remind them that their meritorious labours do not escape observation. A government inspection has been talked of: but happily it is forbidden by its immense expense, as well as repudiated by the freedom of our institutions. It would be premature to enter into any detailed calculation on such an occasion as the present—enough, that while the government inspection of such a district as the East Riding, according to the calculations submitted to the Privy Council, would require an expenditure approaching £1,000 per annum, the Church might effect the same object with full as great efficiency for much less than a third part of that sum. And were such a system once in action, her Majesty's government, having of course no object but the general improvement, might be disposed to aid us in effecting a good, which could not otherwise be attained with similar economy. But for this purpose we must make a commencement ourselves. Government will do nothing till it sees us fairly in action. Our several local boards of education require to be supported with more spirit. We must interest our lay brethren in their purposes and prosperity. Each year should see an increase in the effect which we produce upon the county. We need to be awake and stirring, each in our respective posts, to be earnest and importunate, yet calm and forbearing; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

This is a subject, to which, if it pleases God to spare me, I hope to return on subsequent occasions, when I purpose to lay before you a still more detailed statement of the actual wants of the Archdeaconry, than that lately circulated in the report of our Diocesan Board, and for which we are indebted to the exertions of an indefatigable layman, Robert Baxter, Esq., of Doncaster. But I pass now to the other object for which I ask your attention—an increase, namely, in the opportunities of worship.

Here, likewise, it is a subject of thankfulness that during the present year two Churches have been erected, St. Stephen's at Hull, and St. Paul's at Tickton; and that the Church at Leven, which formerly stood like a lodge in the wilderness, has been brought into the centre of that busy life which it was designed to hallow. These are all movements in the right direction. Yet much more remains, before the people of this Riding have places enough for their public worship. Nor must I pass over what is not of less importance than the erection of new Churches—the restoration of old ones. Great improvements have been made this year at Lund and Skerne, in the Deanery of North Harthill; and the large and handsome Church of All Saints,* at Hunmanby, has been restored, on the whole, in a very satisfactory manner. The same work is in progress in several other places. In these cases, I observe, with peculiar pleasure, the abandonment of that odious principle which would carry personal distinctions into the House of God. A decent regard to family convenience none can censure; but the erection of lofty partitions, whereby the united worship of God is seriously impeded, and the poor are pewed out of their rightful inheritance; the fictitious sale of seats in our Parish Churches, to which the seller can give no title, and to which the buyer acquires none; the illegal locking up of boxes in the common area of the Church, as though they were private dwellings; these are among the causes of that division which has thinned, and that irreverence which has polluted us.

The commencements which have been already made may encourage those who are deterred from attempting to rectify evils which testify to the accumulated neglect of ages. But it is not so difficult, surely, to renovate our Churches, as it was to rear them. Let it only be understood that such restoration, like the original erection of the fabric, must be looked for from the voluntary efforts of devout persons: to expect it from the enforced contributions of the temporary occupiers of the soil would be as unreasonable as illusory. All that can at present be hoped from

* The improvements at Hunmanby and Skerne are owing respectively to the liberality of Captain Mitford and Charles Arkwright, Esq.

such parties is, to maintain with decency what already exists: when their eyes have become accustomed to associate solemnity and reverence with the service of God, their liberality will be more successfully appealed to.

For I nowise question that the habit of devotion would in time produce, everywhere, its natural effect in an augmented zeal for God's service. And it is to no lack of wealth that the niggard meanness which has debased our public worship must be attributed. For every other public work, means are readily provided. Roads and bridges, drains and barriers, private houses and exchanges, appear wherever they are needed: men have only to feel, therefore, that it is an honour to bring of their substance into their Master's Courts—that the best security is to lend to Him—that the only safe mode of preserving the rest, is to hallow it by setting apart a selected portion—that those who store up everything for themselves are in danger of losing all; and that spirit which raised our sacred edifices will be developed anew for their restoration. Then will men learn the true secret of at once expending their means and enjoying them; and every occupant of property will be interested in sustaining the common record of the devotion of his parish. But it must be from ourselves that such efforts must commence. Let the incumbent, who wishes that his Church should be a place suitable for divine service, procure a plan from some competent architect, setting forth such improvements as are needed; and, if possible, also, a drawing, exhibiting the effect of the building when completely re-edified. Let him set this before him as an object for his efforts. Let him exhibit it as well to his parishioners as to those who have an interest in the soil; and experience shews that the cases will not be few in which the liberality of his neighbours will in time respond to his call. Especially may this be expected when he himself possesses the means of commencing so good a work; that he will have the will is a point not to be questioned, for a man must be lost to all feeling of the real dignity of his office who can be content that the place of his public ministrations shall be sordid and neglected, while his private dwelling is ornamental and commodious.

One caution I must give to Church-restorers;—that they will consult economy, as well as taste, by procuring a plan from an architect before they commence their restorations. The attempts at reparation, which have left things worse than they found them, fully justify the law, which I hope the Rural Deans of this Archdeaconry will invariably assist me in enforcing, that no works shall be commenced without a specific permission. I must not omit to mention, that an architect at Hull, Mr. Lockwood, has consented to give gratuitous assistance, by inspecting any plans for partial improvements which may be submitted to him. On this head, caution is the more needed, because architecture, unhappily, is one of those sciences on which the popular mind still remains to be educated. No one, in the present day, would put his name to an ungrammatical inscription; no one would attempt any random alteration of a musical composition: but, though architecture has certain fixed laws, no less than grammar or harmony, yet men feel no shame at perpetrating barbarisms in places the most public, and materials the most enduring, forgetting that in a few years the extension of knowledge will expose these discreditable monuments of their ignorance. Places might be mentioned where a false economy has already defeated its own object, and where considerable sums have been wasted through the ignorance of those to whom ornamental works have been entrusted.

You will not suppose that these observations on the restoration of Churches are dictated by a mere antiquarian partiality for a peculiar style of architecture, or that they terminate in outward beauty or artistic taste. Such trivialities consist neither with the solidity of our nation nor the sobriety of our Church; they are unworthy of being put in competition with the serious and real interests of actual life. But the ground of my recommendations is, that a due attention to such external circumstances is ancillary to that which is a main part of religion; that slight causes may, in this case, be the parent of great results; that the revival among us of the habit of worship may be furthered, as its loss is not uncertainly indicated by the outward aspect of our ritual.

Now, practical religion consists mainly in two things—obedience and worship. The first whereof is chiefly relative to our personal duties; but the second has great reference to that public homage, which, as part of the collective body of the Church, we owe to God. It is the very condition and object for the sake whereof the Church of Christ was formed, and in which its life is situate: the discriminating circumstance which separates the communion of all saints from that individual adherence which any single votary might render to God. Now it cannot be doubted that it would increase our people's sense of the importance of public worship, did they see us consider nothing wasted which contributed to invest it with all the accessories of dignity and honour; did we desire obviously to render God's house the best house in every parish.

And I beg you to consider how much this would tend, in itself, to set forth the Church in its proper character, both among the various societies which of late years have risen up around us, and among those many individuals who are still hovering on the verge of our communion. We cannot be ignorant that the circumstances of our age and country have given a preponderating influence to one portion of the truth of God's word; that religion in the present day has come to be looked upon as a mere personal concernment. Now while we nowise deny, or rather while we strenuously affirm, that religion is an individual concern, we are bound to contend, with equal earnestness, that it is not an individual concern only. The service of God is not based merely on our natural feelings, on the development of any innate principles of human judgment, on the proclivity of the will, on the calmness of the understanding; it is a divine graft and superhuman influence, which has its root above, which descends to individuals from the body, and is partaken by each member of the divine household, through his union with that parent source wherein it resides. Now the gifts of grace are nowhere promised to men as individuals, but as members together of Christ, and as the family of God. What is needed, then, is not to withdraw men's attention from other truths, but to set this also before them. Such is

the glory of God's grace, wheresoever any of its beams have visited the soul, that the regenerate taste cannot choose but recognize its lustre and beauty. It were idle, therefore, to attempt to withdraw men from whatsoever their consciences have affirmed to be beneficial; nay, the very suspicion is likely enough to excite distrust and arouse opposition. But to set before them a new truth which does not militate with the old, but illustrate and explain it—which opens enlarged views of God's kingdom—which unfolds a fresh idea—which calls forth their feelings for the future, without doing violence to the past—this is the true principle of a divine philosophy. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." Our office, therefore, must be, to instil truth rather than to expose error. The parties with whom we have to do have no rival system of belief, no truth which can be set in opposition to our own, but they know not the "manner" of Christ's kingdom,—the transcendent doctrines of His real incorporation with the body of His elect, that He tabernacles among the sons of men, His mysterious presence with the congregation of His people,—of all this they need to be informed. Yet how shall we deal with men who are swayed rather by sense than faith—feeling than testimony—and to whom the history of the past has never been unfolded. There is but one thing which can speak to such men's minds,—the subduing effects of a truly Christian worship. If God be indeed present in the congregation of His saints, if His mysterious influence is vouchsafed there, we must believe that where this portion of religion is adequately set forth, and human efforts properly minister to the divine praise, there will be manifested a present influence which will arrest the attention and carry along the will, so that the feelings of mere worldly interest will be gradually elevated into the perceptions of Christian sympathy. Thus was it with the Christian assemblies of old, when he that believed not or was unlearned, found the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down he worshipped God, and reported that God was of a truth with His people. What is needed, then is, not to tell men their duty, but to accustom them to feel it.

By the neglect of worship has the Church lost her children,—and she must regain them by its revival. Till this portion of their office and heritage is felt and valued by our people, till they take a part in the public service of God as their highest privilege and peculiar blessing, as that which challenges for them a share in the divine promises, and gives them place and entrance amidst the family of God, we have taken no step towards the enlargement of their spiritual sense, because they have not learnt the only language in which mankind are to be instructed.

If public worship were not thus intimately connected with the existence of Christian Society, if it were not a recognition of its character, and proof of its being, we might well marvel at the importance attached to it by the early Christians.

The only express command which bound them to assemble for religious duties was our Lord's order to celebrate the Holy Communion. The Hebrew converts, indeed, might refer to an incidental expression in the long disputed Epistle addressed to them by St. Paul. But the first Gentile believers, at all events, could not ground their ordinary worship on any recorded command either of Christ or his Apostles, while the mere impulse of a natural feeling would hardly have led them to disregard the prohibition of the magistrate. Nor could they have founded their custom on the precepts of the Old Testament; for such collective meetings as theirs, though introduced into the synagogue after the captivity, were no part either of Mosaic or Patriarchal law. Yet their assemblages for public worship were the main thing which excited the attention of heathen persecutors, who would have been indifferent what opinions pervaded the depths of society, if its surface had continued unbroken.

Why, then, did the first Christians provoke what might seem so needless a jealousy? Why did not they allow their opinions to spread like a literary taste or philosophical conviction? What induced them to challenge opposition from the empires of the world, by presenting themselves in the obnoxious light of a spiritual kingdom? Yet we find everywhere that public worship was the fundamental law of their religious union; as men could

not be Christians save by participation in that sacred rite of the Lord's Supper, whereby they were united to Christ, so were public prayer and praise held to be the necessary conditions of individual welfare. The reason was, that private benefit was felt in that age to result from participation with Christ, as engrafted members of His mystic body. And, therefore, the independent allegiance of unconnected worshippers was not enough; the Gospel was not to be locked up in each man's bosom, his religion being a personal affiance, his faith the judgment of his own understanding; but social worship was the necessary condition of church-membership. To prescribe it was as needless as to assert the inspiration of the Gospel, when once admitted to be the words of the son of God; for, allow public worship to be communion with Christ, and what believer could be indifferent to the Lord's presence?

Now, the increased importance of public worship in the present day, is exactly proportionate to its diminished estimation. We need it, not only for its inherent advantages, but also as the stay or restorer of that very truth, from which in earlier days it was a spontaneous and unbidden produce. For, can we disguise from ourselves that a large proportion even of our more earnest attendants are wholly ignorant that any peculiar *gift* is to be expected through the instrumentality of Christian ministers? Is not their object instruction, if not excitement? Do not they measure the effect by what they feel, and think the present result the sole test of edification? Have they any serious belief that the Church of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, and that each minister in his appointed place is a steward of the mysteries of God? On this subject we may quote the opinion of a well informed and dispassionate historian, who illustrates the little sensation produced by the exclusion of the nonjuring bishops in the year 1688, by remarking that the "established liturgy was and is at present in the eyes of the great majority, the distinguishing mark of the Anglican Church, far more indeed than episcopal government, whereof so little is known by the mass of the people, that its abolition would make no perceptible difference in their religion." Mr. Hallam's assertion is

strikingly borne out by what befell the Church of Scotland at the very period to which his observations refer. The mass of the Scotch, except in a small portion of the West, were living contentedly under the episcopal government which had prevailed chiefly in that country from the year 1612 until the æra of the revolution. To what can we refer their ready compliance with the interested attempts of William III. to introduce Presbyterian doctrine and discipline, save to their lack of an established Liturgy. Except to those who were well taught in the principles of their faith, the change from one source of authority to another seemed immaterial. A portion only of the more educated classes continued from conviction to be members of the same primitive communion with ourselves, and remain as a scanty remnant in the inheritance of their fathers.

A similar change, Mr. Hallam asserts, might easily befall the English Church, but for the national attachment to the Book of Common Prayer. Indeed its possibility is increased by causes which at the revolution were yet slumbering in the womb of time. For while the other ranks of the ministry have expanded themselves in a manner somewhat proportioned to our increased population, the unhappy limitation in the number of our spiritual rulers has precluded any proportionate development of this part of our system. Our altars are served by ten times as many priests as in the time of Elizabeth, but confirmation and orders are not ministered by more hands than were found needful for a tythe of our population. This evil, my reverend brethren, can hardly be remedied till the residue of the clergy follow your example, and petition her Majesty to grant that opportunity of synodical deliberation, which she is pledged to concede to their request—but its existence sufficiently accounts for the popular ignorance. Formularies and Canons will never teach the mass of mankind, whose instructor must be experience, and the key to whose faith lies in the usages of the age. Till the episcopate therefore is so far increased that its functions can be adequately developed—a thing at present notoriously impossible—what marvel if our people believe the Bishop to be only a check upon the actions of the clergy, and that his functions might be as easily discharged by any

commissary of the crown. Indeed, it is to be feared that this notion is not confined merely to vulgar minds. Now it is vain to tell such persons of those more sacred objects of this order which our service book declares; the ancient maxim *Ecclesia est in Episcopo* is a mere unpractical statement till it is exhibited in action. Under these circumstances, what remains to constitute a Churchman save attachment to our public ritual. If the principles of our system are so little appreciated that the majority of our people neither know nor value those peculiar blessings which result from union with an Apostolic Church, to what can their attachment be linked, save to that mode of public worship, which at all events is no unmeaning name, but which lives and acts among them. A Churchman is in reality a man who believes in the doctrines, and lives in the communion of the Church; who abides *i. e.* "in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer." But the name is popularly applied in a loose, indefinite, uncertain manner; and persons are supposed to be Churchmen who lead unholy lives, and are habitually absent from the Lord's table. With many, the word has no other signification than that the parties are occasional listeners in the House of God. Now the habit of public worship is the only mode of conveying conviction to such minds. Its office is to lead men to that belief from which in past ages it resulted. Let them once learn to regard it in its true light, as the collective action of the Christian community; as sustaining our title to be one with that family of Christ, with which is the Lord's Spirit; as essentially distinct from any private offering or voluntary assemblage; and we shall have done much to teach them the forgotten truth, that Christ is truly present with His Church among the generations of mankind.

Our whole conduct then, my reverend brethren, in the performance of our public office, must be subservient to the great end of leading our people to regard public worship in its true light. To say that we should ourselves be grave, reverential, and devout, is almost superfluous. But it may be as well to notice, that an attention to what may seem the minor decencies of rubrical observance, falls under the same head. It is because we are in

God's presence, discharging as His ministers a public part, that each word and gesture is to be adapted to that authorised rule which directs our conduct. Therefore, are we clothed in a peculiar dress, that we may be taken out of the ordinary rule of our every-day demeanour. What would be affectation in a private man, is but a due sense of the solemnity of his office in the public messenger of the Church of God. Now, unless our people see this distinction regarded by ourselves, are *they* likely to regard it ? This is doubtless the reason why a punctual observance of its rubrical directions is demanded from every minister of our Church. It were superfluous to inculcate the necessity of this obedience, for it needs no words to prove, that what men have solemnly promised they are bound to perform. If it be urged that some rubrical irregularities are too trivial to require notice, let us remember that it is the more inexcusable to be led by trivial causes to depart from the enjoined orders of the Church. The case seems to be provided for in the preface to the Prayer Book, which reminds us that "although the keeping or omitting of a ceremony in itself considered is but a small thing ; yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God." Nor let it be said that individual clergymen are exonerated from this guilt, when obedience is not enforced upon them by their Bishop ; for the Order of the Prayer Book, which enjoins them to refer dubious cases to his decision, expressly limits his dispensing power to such cases as are not contrary to anything which is contained in this book. We give proof, therefore, that we look at worship as a public ministration in God's presence, when we render a careful attention to its prescribed solemnities. Through that perfect uniformity, which results from dutiful obedience to an established order, the office of prayer being discharged everywhere with one form and one spirit, exhibits itself as the uniting principle of a national devotion. What better fitted than this spectacle, backed by the fervent co-operation of innumerable worshippers, to regain those who have wandered from the fold, to absorb them again into the mighty stream of the public piety, and to teach them the true meaning of united worship ?

It is as contributing, then, to such an enlightened judgment, that an attention to the external circumstances of devotion is worthy of regard. That the House of God should accord with the solemn and inspiring feelings of devotion,—that when men enter it, they should remember the Psalmist's words, "O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker,"—that every knee should be bent in reverence, every voice lifted up in adoration; these are no trivial niceties, whether we regard the effect upon our brethren, or what is due to the ceremonial of His courts, who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

And here must be noticed a difficulty which you will no doubt experience, and which it will require patience as well as reason to overcome. When men have been unaccustomed, as in many of our villages, to take part in the service, they are open to the delusion that written prayers are in some measure inconsistent with fervency of spirit, and that the affections will not flow forth within the artificial barriers of a preconceived devotion. That it has been so with themselves is obvious, otherwise they would not have been deaf to the Church's call, when she invited them to lift up their voices in the sanctuary. But that this error is their own fault—that it is by no means essential—that it flows from their negligent use of an appointed means,—is a thing which it is less easy to make men feel than to demonstrate.

To prove it, indeed, seems easy enough. Have we not our Lord's own example for a form of prayer? Was not written prayer the usage of that Jewish Church in the worship whereof he participated? Is not a part of the language of our Prayer Book actually employed in the perfect worship of the hosts of heaven? Has not the whole book of Psalms been put into the mouth of the Christian Church by God's Spirit? But more than this: not only is the use of a form of prayer defensible, it is, in truth, the only means by which the full purposes of Christian worship are attainable. Suppose one party to pray in the presence of others, they may be edified, as St. Paul expresses it, by his words, and his fervour may kindle theirs, but it is no common

prayer; — they do but listen to his expressions. Cases may occur, indeed, in which the speaker's line of thought may be so familiarly known, that his hearers may anticipate his conclusion; but, in such instances, a form is in reality employed, though a more judicious and considerate form might often be adopted. In many cases, indeed, there is a virtual recurrence to the very practice which has been so justly censured in the Romanists, who think it enough that the people should know the general purport of the priests' petitions, and should accompany him silently after their own way, and in their own language. Thus we hear of persons who testify their approbation of a prayer offered in their presence, by reiterated and sometimes unmeaning acclamations. A somewhat similar custom prevailed at one period in a part of Spain, where, according to the Mosarabic usage, the people were taught to exclaim Amen, at each succeeding clause of the Prayer of our Lord; but even in that land it has been abandoned—nor did it ever find entrance into our own. And there seems small wisdom in introducing it in the present day, since it implies an obvious forgetfulness of our Lord's prohibition against using vain repetitions like the heathen, as well as of St. Paul's counsel, to pray with the spirit, and to pray with the understanding also.

Indeed, why should one part of the Apostle's precept be deemed at variance with the other? No one questions that the singing of hymns gives scope for the utmost measure of warmth and fervency. Yet, unless the words were agreed upon beforehand, how could men join with one accord in their adscription. United praise would thus be impossible, because men could not follow unwritten words with which they were previously unacquainted. Now what is common prayer but the uniting in like manner in the same petition? Is not praise as much an address to God as prayer; do not we speak to him whom we thank, as much as to him whom we supplicate? The mass of men have the same wants, as they have the same reasons for rendering gratitude; and why should they not employ the same words for petitioning favours, as well as for rendering to the Giver their thanksgiving and praise?

Besides, our Lord has been pleased to sanction the use of pre-

conceived expressions, not only by his own example, but by a promise of peculiar importance. The common prayer of the Church, however few the worshippers, entitles them to an attention which surpasses what is promised to any single devotion. If two of you shall agree upon earth as touching anything which you shall ask, it shall be done for you of my Father which is in heaven. Observe the peculiar fulness of promise conditional on the common participation in a pre-arranged devotion. With such sanction from scriptural authority, and with those divine examples of prayer and praise which have been bequeathed to us in the book of Psalms, it were impossible that so singular a blessing should be neglected, did not entire disuse make our people wholly ignorant of the rich mine of thought and feeling which the service of the Church affords.

But how are we to awaken them to greater attention? How shall we induce them to seek for an ore, of the value whereof they know nothing? Where are we to begin our efforts? It would not, I fear, be unreasonable to imagine localities where there would scarcely be found two or three persons enlightened in the great truth that the Christian Kingdom is set up in the world, and that by union with the Church men are associated in its ranks. Are there not places in which all serious and vital godliness is associated merely with the thought of personal religion, where no sense prevails of the supernatural blessings which are promised to communion with God in His public ordinances, where men look solely to the experience of their individual minds, and belief in the truth of Christ's public presence is well nigh obliterated? What follows from such lack of faith, but that lack of devotion with which we are so familiar? Do men enter God's House almost as carelessly as they would the Market-place,—do they sit at ease when the congregation is called upon to fall down with one accord before the Majesty of Heaven,—is their voice silent when men are invited to respond in prayer and Psalm,—do they render no loud Amen when the priest offers to God the collective service of the multitude, as though for them were no part in the solemn offering of the people's worship,—we cannot doubt that such men have no

knowledge of Christ's presence, or any belief in the efficacy of that sacrifice which the Church has been elected out of all nations to offer. There may be among them much private worth and personal holiness—and may God in His mercy through Christ accept and increase it—but of the peculiar truths of the Christian covenant they are doubtless ignorant, they are untaught in the doctrines of grace, in a material portion of the creed of the Apostles they are uninformed, like the Samaritans they worship they know not what, they are in danger of still greater and more fatal heresies, and of all the inspiring and renewing effects of Christ's special presence they are absolutely bereft.

And yet how are such persons to be instructed? The mere force of teaching will do little for their benefit. The facts of the Christian system have lost that novelty which produced the habit of devout worship among the earlier disciples. When men in adult years were suddenly translated from Pagan darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, their wonderful alteration produced such feelings of awe, reverence, and thankfulness, as were manifested in the consentient supplications of the Christian multitude. Then, those very psalms and prayers to which our brethren in this neighbourhood listen with a careless and insensible neglect, were responded to by the ardent and devout voices of thronging congregations. Their responses, their psalms, are compared, as is well known, to the voice of many waters. And we hear with thankfulness, that when our Church is planted out in the new soil of heathen countries, the half-civilized inhabitants of Africa or New Zealand are in like manner not unmoved by invitations which our own countrymen hear with indifference; that the responses to our service are now re-echoed in their native tongues with such piety and enthusiasm as befits the service of the King of Heaven. Glad must we be that men should come from the East and West, and North and South, and sit down as welcome guests in the great supper which is set forth before mankind in the Church of God; but O shame, my brethren, and confusion of face to ourselves, who living in a Christian land, being by birth and adoption the children of the kingdom, have lost the habit of worship from the midst of us.

Excuse these passionate exclamations, to which I am sure any zealous man among you must often be tempted. Surely the prophets of old time would have called heaven and earth to witness against the irreverence and coldness of mankind, had they seen men assemble as our countrymen do in God's House, without even bowing the knee in worship, without witnessing either by word or deed, by answer or gesture, that they take any part in addresses to which the very stones might be expected to respond. And yet for all this I am far from supposing that there is no piety and devotion in the hearts of those who in the habit of worship are so lamentably defective. But since there are no new facts, and no fresh profession by which to alter their ways, it is impossible to enlist them in the startling and unwonted usage of a new service. Preaching, and instruction in old truths, will never move men to enter upon the novel practice of united worship. Rather must our beginning be on the other side, and by a new mode of worship must we lead them to the comprehension of truths, which they have heard without comprehending. They must join together in the inspiring worship of the Church, they must take part each for themselves in her office, they must listen to those commands which all their lives they have neglected, before they can enter into the truth of Christ's presence with His people, or discern the divine significancy of what they have been wont to hear, "the holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee."

Here, then, lies our difficulty. We must infuse a belief in the existence of Christ's Church, not so much by the force of argument, as by the habit of devotion. We must teach men through their prayers. Instead of founding habit on belief, we must build up belief through habit. And, no doubt, some part of this work may be effected through personal persuasion. The man who unites firm faith with earnest devotion, who is himself a living pattern of the principles which he desires to cherish, will diffuse the contagion of a godly example among those who are within the sphere of his influence. For this end, we need to be ourselves fully convinced of those truths to which we have declared our

assent at our ordination, that the ministration of the doctrine and sacraments, as they obtain in the Church of England, is accordant to the commandments of God. Let a man be duly versed in Holy Scripture and ancient authors; let him perceive, as the preface to the Ordination Service witnesses, that Christ's Church has existed from the days of the Apostles: let him be well grounded in those unanswerable arguments by which the Anglican Divines have shown that its present practice in this land is conformable to ancient law and Apostolic usage; let his convictions ripen into a feeling, and take root in his soul as what neither requires proof nor admits refutation; let him be ready to risk all on this basis, and to flinch neither at the weakness of friends nor the violence of enemies; let him resolve, at all hazards, to put his resolutions into action, and to exhibit in the face of mankind the principles of the cross; let him make up his mind neither to desire praise nor fear censure, but to fight to the death under Christ's banner against the maxims of an evil age; and it is certain that He who sways mortal hearts will in time reward the fidelity of his service. Whereas, a pusillanimous doubt whether the Church is truly Christ's earthly kingdom, and whether invisible gifts are really dispensed through the hands of earthly ministers, will chill his heart and enfeeble his efforts. The same confidence in his principles will produce a spirit of truly enlightened affection towards those who separate themselves from the body of Christ, instead of that party rancour which would be as repulsive to them as dangerous to ourselves; for nothing would be more fatal either to our peace or our usefulness, than to allow that godly zeal with which we ought to contend for the truth, once delivered to the saints, to be contaminated by the low and pitiful suggestions of personal jealousy. To be actuated by charity to men's souls, not by love of popularity; to lament their separation, because it shuts them out from the grace of sacraments, not because it diminishes the number of our own hearers; to be zealous for Christ's glory, instead of wishing to be held in admiration because of advantage; this is truly to act upon the principles of a Churchman.

But we must not flatter ourselves that our admonitions, how serious, earnest, and affectionate soever, will produce at once any great effect. Men, in general, are not to be reasoned by old arguments into a new practice. We must teach them by example the nature of public worship. Yet, how are we to begin? In some cases the question is hard to answer, but in others the reply is obvious: worship, like charity, must begin at home. Are we not reminded by Joshua's declaration, that from the obedience and order of individual families must arise that spirit which, radiating more widely as it advances, and interfusing and extending its influence, will gradually overspread the whole surface of social life. And where, if not in the families of the clergy, must we look for an attention to the heart-stirring declaration of the Patriarch, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" Every clergyman, to whom God has given the government of an household, may secure, at all events, such habits of common worship amidst those who are sheltered by his own roof, as may teach his parishioners for what purpose they assemble together. I am not speaking now of the daily duty of public intercession in Church, but of the effect which may be produced upon the people on the Lord's Day, if the habit of public worship be duly cultivated in the family of the priest. There is no clergyman, probably, whose daily life is not consecrated by some species of family devotion. But it may be questioned whether the mode in which this duty is performed is always that which is best adapted to make our households, as the Ordination Service suggests, "wholesome examples and patterns, as much as in us lieth, to the flock of Christ." Of the forms of worship which have been composed for family use, during the present century, many have been the work of good men, and are adapted to call forth the feelings and express the wants of our nature. But, without exposing the Book of Common Prayer to be viewed in the unattractive light of a compulsory service, it may certainly be expected that the enthusiastic praises which our Ordinal receives should lead men, if not to adopt, at all events to imitate it. Whereas, nothing is more usual than for men to speak of the Liturgy as the sublimest

and most spiritual of all uninspired compositions, who not only abstain from its use six days in the week, but seem studiously to shun all approximation to its spirit. Of those who have gone fully along with the arguments which have just been adduced in behalf of a Liturgic form of worship, many will be positively startled at the thought of its practical adoption. Yet, when persons use unpremeditated prayers in their families, or when they have recourse to such multiplicity of forms as may supply endless variety, their course is exactly contrariant to that rule of our Reformers, which commands the clergy to use "Morning and Evening Prayer" every day, under a feeling that one day stands in want of few petitions which are not needed by another. If it be said that persons will not be attentive to prayers which are continually employed, is not this an objection to the use of any public Liturgy? We come back, therefore, to the very fallacy which has been already refuted. If unpremeditated prayer is expedient in a family, it is difficult to discern why it is unsuitable in that larger household, the Church of God. But, in truth, its adoption in a family is found to produce the same evils as would attend its employment in public worship; that common prayer, united worship, the consentient flowing forth of many persons in the self-same petitions, is impossible. Our Reformers were clearly of opinion, and I believe that no one has ever tried the experiment without witnessing to its success, that the constant reiteration of the same prayers, if men combine with one heart and one voice in giving them meaning and utterance, infuses rather a relish than a distaste for their use. But even if the rule which they have prescribed is not fully complied with, yet to render a partial obedience to its spirit would in some measure contribute to the same result. Suppose only that the family devotions of the clergy, if not consisting of the Order of Morning and Evening Prayer, were framed in some degree upon its model. Would not the custom of bearing their part in responses and psalms give their households that habit of public worship which, even among them, is often wanting? Might not this spirit spread to the rest of the parishioners? If the priest's family do not kneel in prayer, if

they take no part in the Church's public acclamations, if they listen unconcerned while he invites them to join him in praise and supplication ; can we wonder if a similar listlessness is found in the congregation ? Are we not taught by the Apostle, that a due care for our individual households is an essential requisite for the discharge of our public duties ? For, if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God.

If the clergy in general were more attentive to this subject, their influence might modify the whole manner of performing the important duty of family devotion. The laity who have adopted this salutary practice, might often be guided to a more expedient manner of performing it. The general prevalence of the present usage must be traced, probably, to the fact that, in former times, family prayers were often employed by those who disliked that more frequent observance of public worship, which was maintained till the earlier part of the last century. The consequence has been, that the great mass of forms of family devotion have been constructed upon a puritan basis. Not only is their language oftentimes cold and unspiritual, implying little gratitude for the benefits of the Baptismal covenant, and a low view therefore of the responsibilities of the Christian character—the very points which in the consentient devotions of a Christian family should be brought prominently forward,—but their very form and arrangement show that the public offices of the Church have not been the ideal models after which they have been fashioned. An obvious proof is the manner of using the Lord's Prayer. This hallowed form of words has of long time been employed in the English Church as the introduction to our acts of common worship. "It has been the foundation," according to the recommendation of Tertullian, "upon which our other prayers have been built." Such was not the primitive usage, because as none but Christians could properly employ our Lord's words, and address God as their Father, this prayer could not be used publicly in the commencement of worship, while a large portion of the congregation consisted of unbaptized men. But not only does the daily service of the English Church begin with the Lord's Prayer, so soon as the

profession of penitence and promulgation of forgiveness have prepared the worshippers to appear before God; but the Communion Service, and the series of prayers which follow the reading of Scripture, are commenced in the same manner. A similar practice is observable in the private prayers of some of our ancient worthies. But, whether from inadvertence, or from superstitious aversion to the usages of the Church, the Directory for Public Worship, which was put forth by the Long Parliament, together with their prohibition of the Liturgy, defers all mention of the Lord's Prayer to the conclusion of its ordinances. And this example has been followed in most forms of family devotion.

A still more serious evil has been the prevalent adoption of protracted recitations by the reader,* instead of that system of antiphonal response of which the Book of Common Prayer affords so striking an example. Yet what can be better than the usage which the Church has sanctioned, whether we regard its authority, or its effect? Not only was it adopted in the Jewish Church, when under the immediate direction of God; but the selfsame manner of worship is practised, as we are assured, by that portion of the united family of worshippers which stands nearest to the throne of God, with which the Church militant must naturally crave to be associated. And if we regard the natural effect of a frequent interchange of address and answer, we must recognise their efficacy in arresting the attention, and aiding the devotion, of those whose thoughts are too apt to be left behind in a lengthened supplication. The two systems, which are thus opposed to one another, depend in reality on two different principles, and propose to themselves different results. The usage of reciting continuous prayers proceeds

* It is not designed to recommend the custom of those who read portions of the Liturgy in their family worship, without providing that the rubrical responses shall be made by their domestics. This habit does injustice to the Book of Common Prayer, which was framed for an antiphonal service, and loses its effect so soon as its principle is abandoned; while the custom of hearing the prayers without taking part in them will rather prevent than encourage the practice of responding. The same may be said respecting the use of the Psalter: the Psalms will be found to be far more impressive when read, according to the Church's intention, as prayers or hymns, than when converted, according to the practice of the present day, into lessons: while the daily habit of employing them will render persons, who are comparatively illiterate, so familiar to their use, that they will be able to take part in them.

on the notion that prayer is a species of instruction, and is mainly designed to admonish the auditory. The antiphonal responses of our public ritual suppose, on the other hand, that the great end of prayer is God's worship. The former, therefore, seeks such variety of expression as may stimulate the hearer by its novelty; the latter desires that the public offices may be so familiar to men's minds, that all may be able to partake in them. Now, strictly speaking, it is this last system only which has in view the real purposes of public prayer. And therefore, without implying censure upon those who have adopted other methods of doing good, I cannot but think that the clergy would find great advantage from constructing their family devotion on the model of our public offices. In places in which the Church service is not publicly employed, the use of the greater or lesser Litany, according to the day of the week, together with the appointed portion of the Psalter, would supply opportunity for accustoming their households to bear part for themselves in social worship. Indeed such an usage seems naturally suggested by the obligation which the clergy have themselves contracted, that either in public or private they will make daily use of the Common Prayer. Surely those who maintain a form of family service, which has no reference whatever to the authorised formularies of the Church, are hardly showing them such genuine affection as is likely to tell upon the feelings of their people. Nothing is more important for the clergy than consistency. Should it ever seem, that while eulogising the Book of Common Prayer in public, in private we disrelish its use; should we abandon it whenever we can evade the requirements of authority, and rather accept it as a necessary bondage than resort to it as the most appropriate expression of our unconstrained thoughts; we can hardly expect that our insincerity will escape detection, or that our words will weigh more than our actions.

And this leads to the last observation with which I will trouble you, that if we would set our people the example of united worship, and desire to infuse a spirit of devotion and faith, our only course is to *be* what we inculcate, and to set forth our advice in our lives. How far we have each done this heretofore, is a question which I

leave to your own consciences. You will have to answer it at the day of the Lord Jesus, before a far different auditory. So much only I will say, that where a clergyman's vows say one thing, and his life says another; when, after promising at his ordination to lay aside the study of the world and the flesh, his first objects are pleasure, wealth, or advancement; however he may deceive himself he seldom deceives others, but is soon felt to be, what it is impossible to deny that he is, the most contemptible being that beholds the sun. But it is not merely to escape men's censure that I would beseech you to *be* what your vows require, but still more because you will find no acceptance from Him whom you serve, unless you pray from the heart, and live according to your prayers. Now the great trust that has been committed to our hands—the treasure which we have in earthen vessels—can prosper only through His blessing, who rules the wills and affections of mankind. He can make us acceptable with those who hate, and revered by those who despise us, Let Him go forth with us, and our arms prevail—let Him leave us, and we must turn back in the day of battle. What, then, shall win us success, save that effectual fervent prayer to which the ear of heaven is accessible? Did our Great Master in the days of His flesh pour forth strong crying and tears, and was heard in that He feared, and shall we expect our warfare to succeed without earnest and importunate supplication? This must be the secret of our strength in the warfare of the approaching year. Many souls ought this year to be gathered into our Master's fold: may He increase our efforts and further our success; that we may be acquitted of our this year's labour, at that awful retrospect—"The hour of death and the day of judgment."

APPENDIX.

As a specimen of the use which may be made of the Church Service in family worship, the following plan is suggested.

It is presumed that every member of the family is provided with a copy of the Prayer Book.

AN ORDER OF MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.

(WHEN DAILY SERVICE IS NOT OFFERED IN CHURCH.)

All standing up.

Reader.—O Lord, open Thou our lips.

Answer.—And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

R.—O God, make speed to save us.

A.—O Lord, make haste to help us.

R.—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

A.—As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end.

R.—Praise ye the Lord.

A.—The Lord's name be praised.

Then are read the Psalms for the day of the month, in alternate verses. Then (all sitting down) is read a Lesson from the Old or New Testament. Then is said The Confession (all kneeling): the whole family repeating each clause after the reader.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended

against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent; According to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of Thy holy Name. Amen.

O Lord, we beseech Thee, mercifully hear our prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto Thee; that they whose consciences by sin are accused, by Thy merciful pardon may be absolved; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

Reader.—O Lord, show Thy mercy upon us.
Answer.—And grant us Thy salvation.
R.—O Lord, make clean our hearts within us.
A.—And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us.

Then follow the Collect for the day, the Collects for Peace and Grace, or the two Collects for Evening Prayer, with other Collects at the discretion of the Reader: the family answering, at the end of each Collect, Amen.

On Wednesday and Friday Morning, the Litany may be read, the family answering to every petition.

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